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DIVORCES IN FRANCE.

Resultats Statistiques de Cinq Années de Divorce (Statistical Results of Five Years of Divorce): V. Turquan; *L'Economiste Français*, October 26, 1889.

On the 27th of July, 1884, France enacted a law permitting absolute divorce, which had not previously been allowed since the year 1816. This law provided not only that marriages might be absolutely dissolved upon sufficient cause shown, but also that *séparations de corps* (corresponding to our limited divorces) which had existed for three years might be *converted* into absolute divorces. The law also contained a provision for the granting of *séparations de corps* upon any of the grounds for which an absolute divorce might be granted. The proceedings under this law were simplified by an act passed April 18, 1886. As a natural result of these laws one would expect to find an abnormal number of absolute divorces granted in the first years of their existence, for the statistics for those years would naturally include not only "*divorces directs*," as the French call those which have not been preceded by a limited divorce or *séparation de corps*, but also a large proportion of decrees granted to persons who had previously obtained limited divorces, and who, unless reconciled, would obviously desire to have such separations converted into absolute divorces. By a parity of reasoning we would expect to find the number of divorces by conversion of previous *séparations de corps* gradually diminish as the accumulations of past years were adjusted to the new conditions, until eventually the normal should be reached.

M. Turquan in his article under the above caption analyzes some of the statistics as to *absolute* divorce in France since the law of 1884 became operative, and from his paper we extract the following statements.

The number of absolute divorces granted, by years, was as follows:

1884 (five months),	1,657
1885,	4,227
1886,	2,949
1887,	3,636
1888,	4,708
Total,	17,177

These figures, he states, give an average of 23 divorces to 10,000 existing households or married couples, or one divorce to 435 married couples. Thirty per cent of the divorces were granted in the department of the Seine alone; forty-five per cent in the remaining urban districts of France; and only 25 per cent in the rural districts. From these figures and the population M. Turquan deduces that divorce is 12 times as frequent in Paris as in the rural districts, and that in the remaining urban districts it is only $\frac{2}{3}$ as frequent as in Paris, but 5 times as frequent as in the rural districts. The article gives the number of divorces granted in each of the departments of France per 10,000 existing married couples, which range from 88 in the department of the Seine to 1 in the departments of Côtes-du-Nord, Lozère, and Savoie. As might have been expected, a large but decreasing proportion of the divorces granted were by way of conversion of old *séparations de corps* into absolute divorces, 93 per cent of all the absolute divorces granted in 1884 being of this nature, the proportion falling to 53 per cent in 1885, 33 per cent in 1886, and 19 per cent in 1887. Correspondingly, there has been an increase in the number of "*divorces directs*." As to the causes of absolute divorce, M. Turquan states that 76 per cent were on the ground of excesses, cruelty, or serious injuries; 21 per cent on the ground of adultery, and 3 per cent on the ground of sentence to corporal and infamous punishment, and observes that these proportions do not hold for limited divorces (for which class of divorces he does not give the statistics), in which $\frac{2}{3}$ of the cases are for excesses, etc., about $\frac{2}{10}$ for adultery, and $\frac{1}{10}$ for sentence to corporal and infamous punishment. Of the total number of divorces on the ground of adultery, 29 per cent have been granted for the adultery of the husband as against 71 per cent for the adultery of the wife. M. Turquan states, however, that these figures do not show the respective morality of the sexes, "as it is well known that adultery of the husband and that of the wife are not viewed in the same manner by the law-maker" (*législateur*). This is evidently a slip, as the *law* of France is precisely the same for both sexes. M. Turquan probably meant that the *courts* viewed the adultery of a husband more leniently than that of the wife, but I should prefer to explain the varying proportions by the suggestion that wives are less suspicious, less able to verify their suspicions when aroused, and also more lenient toward such a fault than are husbands.

Classifying the divorces granted during the four years, 1885-1888

inclusive, by ages of the divorced persons, M. Turquan finds that the women divorced in Paris were older than those divorced in the provinces, whereas the division by age among the men was about the same in Paris as elsewhere. For the whole of France the majority of the divorced women were between the ages of 30 and 45, while the majority of the men were between 35 and 50. The average age for divorce in 1888 was 40 years 8 months for the men, and 35 years 7 months for the women, whereas it had been at the time the law of July 27, 1884, came into force 44 years 6 months for the men and 39 years 8 months for the women. Taking the marriages dissolved by divorce in 1885 and 1888 respectively, M. Turquan analyzes them by duration, and finds that the duration of marriage has materially decreased. Twenty-three per cent of the marriages dissolved in 1885 had existed less than 10 years, and 32 per cent had existed more than 20 years. Of those dissolved in 1888 more than 40 per cent had existed less than 10 years, and only 19 per cent more than 20 years.

M. Turquan next divides the divorces granted during the years 1885-1888 according to the occupation of the husband, and comparing these figures with the total number of persons engaged in such occupations deduces that there were among —

Farmers,	25 divorces per 100,000		
Farm laborers and farm domestics,	73	"	"
Manufacturers,	128	"	"
Laborers in manufacturing, etc.,	191	"	"
Public officials,	254	"	"
Proprietors and bondholders,	277	"	"
Merchants,	294	"	"
Employees in commerce and manufactures,	366	"	"
Liberal professions,	433	"	"

M. Turquan states that his figures as to divorces are taken from the *Journal Officiel*, which, he says, gives "the number of divorces registered since the law of July 27, 1884, became operative." By the French law (Code Civil, Art. 251) it is provided that transcripts of judgments in divorce shall be entered on the register of the officer of the civil state, and a minute thereof also endorsed on the marriage certificate. It would seem from the language of M. Turquan, and from the figures given by him for absolute divorces, that his statistics are based on the transcriptions entered upon the registers of the officers of the civil state, and not upon the records of the courts them-

selves. M. Turquan's figures for absolute divorce do not (except for the year 1884) agree with those given in the report of the Hon. Carroll D. Wright, United States Commissioner of Labor, in his recent report on "Marriage and Divorce," pp. 1004, *et seq.*, and the figures there given are stated to have been obtained at the Ministry of Justice in Paris.

The following statement shows the divorces as given in M. Turquan's article and as reported by the United States Department of Labor, so far as they cover the same year:—

Year.	M. Turquan.	U. S. Dept. of Labor.
1884	(5 months) 1657	1657
1885	4227	4123
1886	2949	4005
1887	3636
1888	4708

I have had access to the "*Compte Général de L'Administration de la Justice Civile et Commerciale*," for the year 1885, being the official report of the Minister of Justice for that year, and at page xv I find that the courts in that year pronounced 1960 decrees of divorce upon original demand therefor (*divorces directs*), and 2163 in cases in which a *séparation de corps* had previously been granted, or a total of 4123 divorces, thus agreeing with the report of the Department of Labor.

Bnt aside from this there is internal evidence in M. Turquan's article that he has used figures based upon two sets of returns, for he gives the following statement of divorces granted by conversion of prior *séparations de corps*:—

Year.	Divorces by Conversion of <i>Séparations de Corps</i> .	Per Cent of Divorces by Conversion.
1884	1,549	93.0
1885	2,163	53.0
1886	1,300	33.0
1887	1,112	19.0

This statement is intended to show the absolute number of divorces granted by conversion of prior *séparations de corps* and the proportion

which they bear in each year to the total number of absolute divorces granted in that year. Working out the percentages upon the basis of the total divorces reported by M. Turquan we find that (except for the year 1884, for which both reports agree) they are not correct, whereas if we use the tables given in Mr. Wright's report we find the percentages to be correct so far as Mr. Wright's figures go. This seems to indicate clearly that the percentages given in this little table were based on totals differing from those used by M. Turquan in the remainder of the article and agreeing with those given by Mr. Wright. As a consequence of this serious discrepancy it seems doubtful whether M. Turquan's conclusions can be received with any considerable degree of confidence, the variations in figures being so serious as to make it entirely possible that a statement based throughout on the figures of the Ministry of Justice would give rise to different conclusions.

BENJAMIN F. KELLER.

RELIEF OF THE POOR IN GERMANY.

L'Assistance Publique en Allemagne, by Charles Grad, Deputy from Alsace to the German Reichstag, in *L'Economiste Français*, March 9, September 7, and October 5, 1889.

It has been frequently remarked that statistics of public relief tend to reflect rather the administration of the poor law than the condition of the population. An increase of the amount given annually may come from an increased amount of destitution, or a growth in wise generosity, or in unwise generosity, or from an increase of administrative awkwardness, extravagance, or corruption. It was while looking over the reports of the English Poor Law Commissioners that Carlyle wrote "Statistics, one may hope, will improve gradually and become good for something."

M. Grad is greatly interested in tracing the influence of the German guarantee of support to all Germans, and finds that under this ostensibly obligatory provision less is spent by the German poor law authorities in proportion to the population than in Alsace, or France, where relief can only be asked as a favor, and not claimed as a right. During the year 1855 the German empire under the law of obligatory assistance expended a total of 90,282,159 marks for public poor relief,